

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTES

September 21, 2003

Supervisors in Attendance:

Mr. Arthur S. Warren, Chairman
Mr. J. L. McHale, III, Vice Chrm.
Mr. Edward B. Barber
Mrs. Renny B. Humphrey
Mr. Kelly E. Miller

Mr. Lane B. Ramsey
County Administrator

School Board Member in Attendance:

Mrs. Elizabeth Davis, Chairman

Staff in Attendance:

Mr. Craig Bryant, Dir.,
Utilities
Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.,
Supt., School Board
Ms. Marilyn Cole, Asst.
County Administrator
Mr. William Dupler,
Building Official
Mr. Robert Eanes, Asst.
to County Administrator
Chief Stephen A. Elswick,
Fire Department
Mr. Mike Golden, Dir.,
Parks and Recreation
Mr. Bradford S. Hammer,
Deputy Co. Admin.,
Human Services
Mr. Donald Kappel, Dir.,
Public Affairs
Lt. Col. Dennis McDonald,
Police Department
Mr. Richard M. McElfish,
Dir., Env. Engineering
Mr. Steven L. Micas,
County Attorney
Dr. William Nelson,
Dir., Health Dept.
Mr. Francis Pitaro, Dir.,
General Services
Ms. Karen F. Russell,
Risk Manager
Mr. James J. L. Stegmaier,
Deputy Co. Admin.,
Management Services
Mr. M. D. Stith, Jr.,
Deputy Co. Admin.,
Community Development

Mr. Warren called the special meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

1. BRIEFING TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING HURRICANE ISABEL'S IMPACT ON CHESTERFIELD COUNTY AND RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Mr. Warren expressed appreciation to county employees and others for the services they are providing to the citizens as a result of Hurricane Isabel.

A moment of silence was observed for the families of those who lost their lives as a result of Hurricane Isabel.

Mr. Ramsey recognized Mr. Curt Nellis, Regional Coordinator of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management who was present at the meeting. He commended county employees who have been diligently working even though they have their own issues at home as a result of the hurricane. He then introduced Ms. Lynda Price to begin the presentation.

Ms. Price provided an update on the activities of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). She stated that, since the EOC opened on Wednesday, 2,057 calls from citizens and businesses have been answered.

Chief Elswick reviewed responses to the hurricane from the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. He stated the department has responded to 709 calls; there have been 35 civilian injuries and three deaths; and there were two firefighter injuries and two pieces of equipment damaged or destroyed. He further stated the firefighters at Dale Fire Station are filling oxygen cylinders for citizens in need of oxygen.

Lieutenant Colonel McDonald reviewed activities of the Police Department as a result of Hurricane Isabel. He stated 149 police officers were on duty at the height of the storm. He further stated the department has responded to 1,866 calls for service with no injuries; however, 17 police vehicles were damaged on the night of the storm with an estimated total loss of \$70,000. He expressed appreciation to the Sheriff's Department for providing assistance with traffic control and security at the shelters.

Ms. Price stated three shelters were opened at Meadowbrook, Thomas Dale and Bird High Schools, and 650 citizens received services.

Mr. Ramsey stated it appears Chesterfield had far more people in their shelters than Richmond and Henrico.

Discussion ensued relative to accommodating citizens in the northern area of the county with shelter.

Ms. Price stated every school in the county lost power during the storm.

Mr. Ramsey stated the electric grids show that power in the areas of Meadowbrook High School and Manchester Middle School are the most reliable. He further stated the renovations at Thomas Dale included a generator for the purpose of a county-wide shelter. He stated that, until now, the county has never had to go beyond one school to provide shelter.

When asked, Mr. Ramsey stated the cost of purchasing and installing the generator at Thomas Dale was approximately \$400,000.

Mr. Barber stated, as we move forward with new schools, this is an opportunity to address the issue of providing shelter in the northern area of the county.

Mr. Ramsey stated the maximum capacity of 450 at the Meadowbrook shelter was reached very early on.

Mr. Miller requested that the 15 shelter volunteers from the Church of Nazarene be recognized in some way.

Ms. Price stated there are a number of people that the county needs to recognize for their volunteer efforts. She further stated the shelters have now been closed and there are three people who are still being sheltered at a hotel.

Mr. Ramsey stated the county is prepared to address additional shelter issues, if requests continue.

Mr. Mark Askin, Chief of Park Operations, reviewed the county's tree removal efforts. He stated there were 530 calls for tree removal obstructing roads and 20 roads are still closed. He further stated there were 35 crews removing the trees - 12-15 contractual, 9-10 from Parks and Recreation, 6 from Environmental Engineering and 3-4 from the Sheriff's workforce. He stated, by the end of the day, the crews will have put in a total of 4,240 hours and there have been no injuries, indicating that this is largely due to a chainsaw safety training program implemented this year. He further stated the crews will move to the schools tomorrow to begin clearing bus loops and parking lots, as well as parks and libraries. He stated some of the parks have sustained severe damage, which will require a tremendous amount of repairs, estimated at over \$600,000. He further stated the Point of Rocks Park boardwalk completely washed away. He stated the current blocked roads in the county are mostly due to trees in power lines and in some cases high water.

Mr. Ramsey stated staff's objective was to open all roads in the county and make them passable.

Mr. Miller inquired about the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT's) tree removal efforts.

Mr. Ramsey stated VDOT had a few crews out, but county staff was responsible for the vast majority of making the roads passable.

Discussion ensued relative to reimbursement from VDOT for the tree removal since it is a VDOT responsibility.

Chief Elswick stated Fire and EMS could not have responded to emergencies if the county did not clear the roads.

Mr. Ramsey stated, if the county receives reimbursement, a significant part of it will be covered by FEMA.

Mr. Bryant provided details of the water situation in the county as a result of the hurricane. He stated he was notified by Richmond on Thursday evening that their water supply was out of service, and at 1:30 a.m. on Friday, Swift Creek was flooded and out of service. He further stated at 8:00 a.m. Friday, there was a problem with the Chesdin Road pump station generator, at which time there was only one remaining water source available in the county. He stated the city advised him they would be back in service around noon on Friday and they were under a boil water advisory; therefore, the county had to issue a boil water advisory. He further stated the first "no water" call came in around 5 p.m. on Friday, and at approximately the same time, the Chesdin Road pump station came back on line and started

pushing water north into the county. He stated some citizens were without water for a maximum of six to seven hours, depending upon their location. He further stated that hopefully the Swift Creek treatment plant will be back up in two to three days. He stated the system is back in good shape now and there is plenty of water pressure. He further stated the boil water advisory may be lifted tomorrow contingent upon the results of Richmond's water sampling.

Discussion ensued relative to difficulty in communicating with citizens who are without electricity.

Mrs. Humphrey expressed concerns relative to people washing cars and using water unnecessarily.

Mr. Warren requested that the public service announcement regarding boiling of water should also include the necessity for continuing to conserve water to meet the county's needs.

Mr. Ramsey stated hopefully the power will be back on tonight at Lake Chesdin Treatment Plant and pump station, and once that happens, the county will have a greater comfort relative to the quantity issue and will drop the conservation request.

Dr. Nelson stated the current water situation is on the lower end of severity. He further stated normal household usage will flush the lines and provided two alternatives for purifying water - boiling and using bleach.

Mr. Pitaro provided details of debris disposal efforts since the hurricane. He stated citizens are waiting in long lines to dispose of debris. He further stated that, as of noon today, over 8,100 residents have dropped off debris, already exceeding the total number of residents dropping off debris following Hurricane Fran and Hurricane Floyd. He stated that, in order for the county to get back to functioning normally in assisting its citizens, a plan has been developed for curbside residential debris removal. He further stated in the past, this type of service has been performed with internal resources, but the county does not have the resources or equipment to address a disaster of this magnitude. He introduced Mr. Charles Dane, Assistant Director of General Services, to provide details of the proposal that will hopefully get us back to normal within a four-week period.

Mr. Dane provided details of the alternative proposal. He stated there is a contract in place for disaster relief with the Virginia Waste Management Authority, which was activated just prior to the storm. He further stated staff estimates there is over 400,000 cubic yards of debris remaining to be collected, and noted that both county sites together handle just over 100,000 cubic yards in a one-year period. He stated the county has limited resources for debris removal, and it would take cost approximately \$3 million and take approximately four months for the county to remove the debris on its own, with FEMA reimbursing the county for \$2,250,000. He further stated staff feels a contractor could remove all the debris within a month to six weeks at a cost of approximately \$4.5 million, of which FEMA would reimburse \$3,375,000. He stated staff feels the contractor option is very viable and the process could begin as early as Tuesday or Wednesday.

Mr. Pitaro stated the debris pick-up service will be performed concurrently in all five districts; citizens do not have to call the county and request the service; the debris must be placed on the curbside; and there is no limitation on the size of debris.

Ms. Price stated FEMA reimbursement is a much simpler process using a contract than using the county's workforce.

When asked, Mr. Curt Nellis stated debris removal has a 75 percent FEMA reimbursement and 25 percent state and local reimbursement, indicating that he is unsure what portion of the 25 percent will be picked up by the state.

Ms. Price stated in the past the state has provided 11 percent of the cost for debris removal.

Mr. McHale made a motion, seconded by Mr. Miller, for the Board to approve on an emergency basis a neighborhood debris pick-up program using a private contractor; appropriate \$3,000,000 in reimbursement from FEMA (75 percent of the cost); appropriate \$500,000 from the Risk Management Fund; transfer \$1,000,000 from the reserve for capital improvements for the program; and set a public hearing date for October 22, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. to consider re-adoption of the actions relative to the debris pick-up program.

Mr. McHale stated the contractor option allows the county to deploy its own forces to assist citizens and provide support to the school system. He further stated he feels the proposed service will be very much appreciated by the citizens.

Mr. Miller expressed concerns relative to citizens attempting to dispose of other materials besides storm related debris.

Mr. Warren called for a vote on the motion of Mr. McHale, seconded by Mr. Miller, for the Board to approve on an emergency basis a neighborhood debris pick-up program using a private contractor; appropriate \$3,000,000 in reimbursement from FEMA (75 percent of the cost); appropriate \$500,000 from the Risk Management Fund; and transfer \$1,000,000 from the reserve for capital improvements for the program.

And, further, the Board set a public hearing date for October 22, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. to consider re-adoption of the actions relative to the debris pick-up program.

Ayes: Warren, McHale, Barber, Humphrey and Miller.

Nays: None.

Mr. Warren stated it is critical to inform all the neighborhood associations of the debris pick-up program.

After brief discussion, the Board members requested that postcards be sent to each person on their constituent list to inform them of the program.

Ms. Price stated a significant number of residents are still without power -- 80,000 in Dominion Virginia Power's Midlothian District and 60,000 in the Petersburg District. She further stated Dominion Virginia Power deals with

priorities by fixing the outages that will impact the most people.

Discussion ensued relative to the time it will take to restore power to all citizens and to the possibility of rebuilding electrical systems that have been destroyed using underground wiring.

On motion of Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. McHale, the Board directed staff to explore the possibility of requiring utilities to be installed underground in the future.

Ayes: Warren, McHale, Barber, Humphrey and Miller.

Nays: None.

Dr. Cannaday provided an update on the status of schools following Hurricane Isabel. He stated 31 schools are still without power. He further stated food service staff will have to dispose of all food and clean thoroughly before ordering new food. He stated the schools have had no major structural damage as a result of the hurricane. He further stated heating and air conditioning systems cannot be assessed until the power returns. He stated staff has been unable to contact all of the school bus drivers, and noted that many buses may be out of commission because of damage received as a result of the hurricane. He further stated three additional days are built into the school calendar beyond what is required by the state, and contingencies will be developed for making up additional days lost. He stated school closure decisions will be made on a day to day basis depending on power, food and transportation issues.

Mrs. Humphrey requested that Mr. Ramsey update her on Virginia State University's plans to re-open.

Discussion ensued relative to the possibility of re-opening some schools while others remain closed.

Mr. McHale stressed the importance of keeping citizens informed on a continuing basis.

Mr. Dupler provided details of Building Inspection damage assessments as a result of the hurricane. He stated, as of the end of Saturday, 450 damage assessment inspections had been made with a total of \$4.4 million in residential damage; six homes and two accessory structures were completely destroyed; 39 homes were rendered uninhabitable; and 301 homes required repairs but are inhabitable. He further stated he expects all of these numbers to increase. He stated the hurricane was essentially a tree event where trees impacted structures, and there were no failures to structures due to high winds, which is a testament to code enforcement. He further stated the average damage per home was \$12,600, and there was no significant damage to public or commercial buildings although \$250,000 in damages have been recorded. He stated permits for hurricane-related repairs will be issued at no charge administratively and repairs will be authorized to begin immediately, and this information is being provided to residents at the time of the damage assessment inspection.

When asked, Mr. Dupler stated the permits will be issued as storm damage repair permits and data will be available as to the number of permits issued.

2. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION THANKING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR DECLARING CHESTERFIELD COUNTY A DISASTER AREA

Mr. Warren stated the Board was scheduled to consider adoption of a resolution requesting that the President declare Chesterfield County a disaster area.

Ms. Price stated Chesterfield County has already been declared a disaster both for public and individual assistance.

On motion of Mr. Warren, seconded by Mrs. Humphrey, the Board directed staff to send letters to President Bush, Governor Warner and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for addressing the issue of declaring Chesterfield County a disaster area in a timely manner.

Ayes: Warren, McHale, Barber, Humphrey and Miller.

Nays: None.

Mr. Warren requested that town meetings be scheduled as soon as possible to discuss disaster relief efforts.

Mr. Curt Nellis, Regional Director, provided a briefing regarding efforts of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. He stated the disaster field office will open on Monday in Henrico County. He further stated individual assistance from FEMA is for uninsured losses related to the disaster, and noted FEMA is primarily interested in homes being made safe, sanitary and secure. He stated there are no federal programs to assist with removal of trees and debris. He stressed the importance of beginning the documentation process for public assistance from FEMA, and suggested that the county assign a public assistance recovery manager to manage the paperwork and dealings with all the federal agencies to ensure that all funds eligible for are recovered. He stated that at some point in time, the Board should turn off the disaster declaration so that a clear start/stop point is available for auditing purposes and to indicate that the county is back to normal.

Discussion ensued relative to citizens contacting FEMA directly.

Mr. Barber stressed the importance of emphasizing that citizens first contact the county's local emergency number prior to contacting FEMA.

Mr. Hammer recognized Ms. Marsha Sharpe from the Department of Social Services who provided assistance at the shelter for 30 straight hours.

Mrs. Humphrey commended county employees for their disaster relief efforts and stated she has decided to suspend all political activities for the next three to four weeks because this is a time for putting the county back together rather than campaigning.

Mr. McHale commended Mr. Ramsey for partnering with neighboring jurisdictions relative to disaster relief efforts.

Mr. Warren stated Mrs. Humphrey's suggestion relative to ceasing political campaigning is an excellent suggestion, so that everyone can focus on the disaster. He expressed appreciation to staff for the excellent briefing provided to the Board.

4. ADJOURNMENT

It was generally agreed that the Board adjourn at 5:07 p.m. until October 8, 2003 at 4:00 p.m.

Ayes: Warren, McHale, Barber, Humphrey and Miller.

Nays: None.

Lane B. Ramsey
County Administrator

Arthur S. Warren
Chairman